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50 Hillandale Road
Danbury, CT 06811-3611
March 10, 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In reference to: Docket No. 93-1

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioners:

After examining the text of Docket No. 93-1, I am convinced this proposed rule would not contribute to the stated objective of ensuring "the privacy of cellular telephone conversations."

Recent magazine articles on this topic indicate that there are already millions of scanning receivers in use that can receive frequencies in the 800 MHz range. The proposed law would not take effect for another year, providing ample opportunity for scanner manufacturers to sell many more.

Even if a scanner is not capable of receiving signals in this frequency range, a simple converter can be used between the antenna and receiver to shift the frequency of the radio signals.

Trying to ban converters with 800 MHz in and some other frequency range out would be a futile effort. These are very cheap and simple circuits that any electronics hobbyist could build. Plans have been published in electronics magazines.

Besides having no benefits, this proposed rule creates several problems:

1. The non-technical public will believe their conversations are secure. When the truth is learned bitterness and distrust toward the service providers and government agencies will hamper working relations.
2. Privacy will, in fact, be reduced. Prior to these public discussions, it was not realized that cellular frequencies could easily be scanned. Many people who never considered purchasing a scanner will purchase one during the next year.
3. This regulation will place an unnecessary burden on electronics manufacturers. The combined cost of design, production and maintenance will increase the cost of scanners dramatically.
4. This also sets a frightening precedent. It will not be long before other businesses want their frequencies "protected".
5. The practicality of enforcement is nil. Current growth on the 902 MHz band will provide plenty of equipment that could be easily modified to scan signals on the 800 MHz range.

I support the privacy of cellular telephone conversations but object to the method employed. The proper solution to this problem is to have the cellular manufacturers provide encryption options in the phones.

In summary, I urge the Commission to reject the proposed regulations in Docket 93-1 because they would create many problems without making any progress toward the stated goal.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Kevin C. Castner